Significance of Arts and Languages in Polytechnic Education in Nigeria

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Abstract
The term 'polytechnic is derived from the Greek word': 'poli', 'many' and 'technos', 'ants'. And, languages are arts. Considering the classical basis of polytechnic education cum the indisputable unusual significance of arts and languages in polytechnic education, this paper is worried by the seeming forsaken nature of arts and languages in polytechnic education in Nigeria and beyond, regardless of their invaluable role and contributions to it, as they are merely considered as complementary courses for creativity, design and aesthetics, and communication means instead of being run as full-fledge courses. Their deficient curricula for arts and languages also add to the problem. This is partly because their classical goals are now sacrificed for their contemporaries, especially science and technology. Therefore, these scholars advocate complete incorporation of arts and languages into the system, placing them appropriately, curricula review, creation of arts and languages departments, making them compulsory for all courses and programmes. Concerned authorities should make available all the needed logistics, infrastructure, materials, etc. that will make the teaching and learning of tints and languages in polytechnics and even beyond easy, attractive and lucrative. The study concludes that the significance of arts and languages in polytechnic education cannot be over-emphasised. It relied on basically on secondary sources of data collation, besides observation and intuition. The descriptive method and the qualitative approach are employed.

Keywords: *Appraising, Significance, Arts, Language, Polytechnic, Education*

Introduction
Generally, the origin of arts dates back to the beginning of the universe-cum-human existence. That is, art is as old as mankind, while language is older than man, since it began with the creator Himself before creation (Agbedo, 2000:3). Languages are collectively an integral part of arts, and form a versatile field in Arts and Humanities. Their origin in polytechnic education dates back to the advent of polytechnic education in various parts of the world respectively. For instance, in Nigeria, formal arts and languages in polytechnic education emerged with the birth of polytechnic education in Nigeria in the 1970's, formally backed up by the provision of the National Policy on Education of 1978, as amended (cf. FRN, 2004). To that end, art history spans the entire history of mankind from the pre-historic times to the contemporary era (Funch. 1997).

The remote origin of art can he traced to Athens, Sumer and Greece, the cradle of civilization, philosophy, knowledge, development, arts, art appreciation, and sciences, among others. In other words, the studies of arts and languages (linguistics) began with the world's first civilization known as the Mesopotamian civilization of the ancient Sumer city state (c. 3200-280 BCE) through Akkadian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Vedic and Indian civilizations, among others (Brummet et al., 2003: Kramer, l963; Whitehouse. 1977; Whitehouse and Wikins, 1986: Redman. 1978). Language, on the other hand, has a chequered and elusive origin full of various speculations and claims. But of all, the most justifiable is that upon religious faith, especially Christianity, traced to the creation of man and the entire universe, whereby the various religions tend to claim that language was created by their God (gods). For instance, to the Christians, language began at the same time with God, the creator, Himself and the earliest form of God-man interaction (Gen. 1).

Further, the Hindus claim that Sarasvati, the wife of their god, Brahma, created language, while Brahma created the entire universe. For the Babylonians, Nabu created language, while the Egyptian mythology maintains that Thoth, an Egyptian god, created language. Such beliefs are uncountable (Nwala, 2008:2-3; Agbedo, 2000:2).

Be it as it may, the Christian faith divine origin of language suffices for all others, since even the classical thinkers, atheists, scientists, logicians, theologians, polytheists, among others, concluded in the long run that there exists a single (monotheist) Supreme Being, the Christian God cum Muslim Allah. God using language, created all: "Let there be... And there was..." (Gen.1:3). In verse 26, God used language to communicate the collective desire of the Trinity: "Let's make man in our own image and likeness…" Whereas, chapter 3:9-11 contains the first known verbal communication between God and man, when He asked Adam: 'Where are you?' And, Adam replied, 'I heard the sound of thee, and I hid myself.' Even St Augustus so-confirmed this at conversion and before death.

Furthermore, the birth of formal general Arts in Nigeria can be traced to the late 19th century, while its development and studies at schools in Nigeria rose in the mid-20th century alongside Languages and Linguistics. Arts and Languages in Polytechnic Education began with the establishment of polytechnics and other technical colleges across Nigeria between the late 1970's and the early 1980's. But through then to now, no seemingly serious remarkable progress, impact and achievements have been made yet, owing to various factors therein, ranging from the curriculum and place of' arts and languages in polytechnics, shapeless and narrow arts and logistics factors— poor teaching and learning and lack of favourable environment and facilities/aids— to middle cadre manpower development questions and challenges. Languages and Literature, particularly those of Africa and communicative languages like French and English, are yet to gain their deserved grounds in the system. thereby leaving the students/graduates with little or no good knowledge of languages and literature. For instance, no polytechnic in Nigeria runs programmes in Linguistics, but rather the use of languages for instruction\communication and poor study of single languages such as English, French, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Kanuri, Efik. Bekwarra, Tiv, etc., which are misconstrued for the former (Linguistics), the mother, and whole of the integral parts, the latter, which are also yet to gain their due grounds. Consequently, most graduates of this institution, apart from possessing well— grounded technical skills, like those of others, perform poorly particularly in languages and communication, even after the deficient and insufficient prerequisite, mandatory and major

courses in them (cf. Chado, 2006:65-9; Oguegbune-Okwuenu, 2006:71-5; Nwala,2008:3 1/2). A lot more ought to be put in place and done on Arts and Languages in Polytechnics towards the maximal efficacy of its primary, classical and conventional goals/objectives, vision and mission as well as its contemporary pursuits and trends.

Conceptual Clarification
Our key concepts are given scholarly and operational explanations for clarification and easy understanding. They are 'appraising,' significance,' 'arts,' languages' and polytechnic education.' While various definitions, conceptions and explanations have been given variously by different scholars and authorities for the concepts of' language, arts and education in the literature, only closely relevant ones are adopted to suffice for others here. And, other terms are given literal cum operational explanations.

Art, according to Hornby (2010:67-8), means, among others, 'the use of the imagination to express ideas or feelings, particularly in painting, drawing or sculpture;' the skills in arts\s;' 'the subjects you can study at school or university that, are not scientific, such as languages, history or literature;' 'an ability or skill that you can develop with training and practice: a therapist trained in the art of healing.'

Besides the last meaning being compared with science, it reflects the place of arts in the fields of medicine and religion associated with healing. It means that every scientist must be artistic. The above also captures our subject matter and area, where subjects or courses that are not scientific are studied at the polytechnic, a given school of advanced level. But not all artistic courses are non- scientific, since some fields in Arts cut across Arts. A good example is Linguistics, the science (scientific study) of languages, with its vast complex scope, nature, pursuit, essence and methods in both Arts and Sciences on one hand, and social sciences on the other hand. All arguments against the scientific status of linguistics are mere posers to its misplacement in Arts rather than Sciences by its classical geniuses, pioneers and exponents of Sumer and Greece. Sciences emerged after Arts, as the Sumerian and Greek classics and rhetoricians founded sciences like Mathematics, Astrology. Astronomy, Biology, etc. much later after founding Philosophy, Philology (Linguistics), Theology, History and the Arts (cf. Agbedo, 2000). Such placement followed their core interest and discipline areas.

The names (nomenclatures) of various concepts, phenomena, etc. as well as the respective diction: registers/jargons of all fields are of arts and languages creation. So many words, upon language use, have been derived from art: article, artifice, artefact, artisan, artery. articulation, artificial, art therapy, artful, arthritis, arteriosclerosis, arthropod, etc. *As* a science, linguistics is known with methods, observations, tests, data collection. theories, experiments and valid results, which are peculiar to Sciences, whereas, Languages and Linguistics, as an aspect of the society, is a Social Science. Uche (1994:101) observes, Without Language, science cannot strive; this shows that effective communication in science involves ability to use and understand the technical terms as well as interpret information encoded in symbolic form into another hut non-symbolic form of language.' This highlights the extreme essence of languages and arts in all facets of life, including polytechnic education, which we are concerned with.

Again, accordingly, language refers to the generality of all communication means among all living creatures- human and animal, as a natural phenomenon. Whereas, a Language refers to the given language of a given speakers or speech community (ies) as reflected and imbedded in their culture, tradition, existence, cosmology and endeavours in totality; say, English, French,

Bekwarra (a language of the Upper! Northern Cross River), Igbo or Hausa. And, 'languages', on the other hand. refers to the plurality of language, whereby the speech form of more than a single given people are involved, as in the case with polytechnics, like other educational and social institutions, for all their activities and transactions, and as well study some languages professional for proficiency, linguistic prominence and livelihood.

It is prior to the forgoing that the Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia, like her contemporaries, uses English. French, Hausa and the like for instructing\teaching her various students. Similarly, following the invaluable significance of arts, polytechnics run Arts programmes at the two levels: O/ND and HND. However, what is still insignificant therein revolves around the approaches, methods, deficient curricula, poor teaching and learning of arts and languages and lack of logistics. The near-sorry and yet insignificant state of arts in general, within which languages fall, in Africa as a whole, inclusive of Nigeria with her polytechnic education, is lamented by' concerned scholars, arousing loud lamentation.

Arts and languages are known to be the prime vehicle of the scientific, social, political and cultural development and achievements of the advanced nations: Europe, China, Russia, America. etc. (Haliru and lshikwen, 2008 :45-5). Nder (2013:27) agrees with the above, as he notes, 'language plays a critical role in all human and non-human activities, its use is central to the gamut of Communication process at the receptive, expressive and information levels.' This is also the position of Emeka-Nwobia (2007:3) that 'there is no human society without language. They thus, agree that the significance of languages and other arts cannot be over-emphasised, and there can be no any education without them.

The loose thought and claim that communication can take place without language through various communication modes like signs, gestures, attire, gesticulations. silence, dispositions, pictures, singing, dancing, etc. is unjustifiable, fallacious, unprofessional, unempirical, misleading, invalid and anchored on subjectivism, because they are all language aspects, functions and types: human, animal and sign (Anagbogu et al., 2001: 13; Nwala, 2008:12). Therefore, any standard scientific\technical knowledge must be based, and rely on arts and languages to be smoothened by vocational and artistic knowledge— communicated and acquired via language\s at the school. Polytechnic education is generally the education acquired from the technical- and scientific-oriented tertiary institution in Nigeria and beyond.

Significance of Arts and Languages in Polytechnic Education
First, the invaluable place of Arts had long ago placed it over all other disciplines as the highest level of academic (formal) knowledge qualification, i.e. the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Science only relies on and becomes potent with the use of language. Next, all technical skills are artistic-oriented, and all knowledge originated from art. If no language, no communication, no knowledge, no meaningful activities, no nothing! Polytechnic education can never exist without language as well as without relying on arts. Therefore, polytechnics do not just use and rely on arts and languages but also study them as distinct fields at several levels for various purposes, ranging from knowledge acquisition, creativity, communication, development, professionalism to earning sources, sources of livelihood.

In Painting and literature. for instance, effective analysis and appreciation of the aesthetic beauty of arts and culture requires language use and experts— linguists, including micro linguists like those of Bekwarra, Igbo, Efik, Yoruba, Kanuri, Tiv, etc. some of the languages used, taught and learnt at schools, polytechnics inclusive.

It is pertinent to note that to be confident and competent in technical or specialised area is an art. Also, the handful cross-sectional poser on whether television, among others, can be called arts clearly shows arts in technology, as in polytechnic education in Nigeria and beyond. Architecture, with particular reference to Art Nouveau, popular in Europe and the US at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, that uses complicated designs and curved patterns based on natural shapes like leaves and flowers, clearly affirms the significance of arts in not just polytechnic education, but across all technical education of all levels and categories to university education in Nigeria and beyond (Hornby, 2010:67-9). At the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system in Nigeria, a lot of machines were imported, but up to date, they are not used because there are no people to interpret the machines manuals. This shows the place of languages in technology and science.

Hornby's above definition of art, with reference to science: *'an* ability or a skill that you can develop with training and practices,*'* simply highlights the inevitable and paramount place, and the essence of arts and languages in polytechnic education in order to develop certain abilities or skills with training and practise of various fields in Nigerian polytechnics. Again, following the significance of arts, art history emerged, the study of the history of painting, sculpture, etc., a branch of history, one of the areas of arts.

Apart from the above, arts and languages generally constitute the prospects cum backbone for settling all human problems, including the various rising issues of middle cadre manpower development in Nigeria. All human problems stem from language (linguistic) problems, owing to language misuse, underuse or over-use; and linguistic ignorance, negligence, issues and trends. This our assertion reflects the wit of Wittgenstein that the problems of philosophy, the mediaeval philosophy problems, sprawled from linguistic problems anchored on the philosophers' use of language— wrong use of language, involving high-sounding words for mere impression. It implies thus that all human problems can best be avoided or solved linguistically. Nwala (2008:32) lends credence to the foregoing by observing that the numerous problems bedevilling our societies could have been addressed if the linguists were up and doing.

This upholds the role played by linguists alongside languages in solving various human problems, if operational and efficacious. It implies that languages with general (other) arts should be given more concession and attention by creating suitable room for more languages, and general linguistics departments, while training both macro and micro linguists at polytechnics and other institutions. Also, the study and use of arts and languages in polytechnics and others should go beyond the ordinary level so that students and teachers would not use, learn and teach languages and arts for their mere sake without applying them to solving problems (cf. Nwala, 2008). Science and whatever knowledge cannot be learnt without languages. Moreover, middle cadre manpower is a linguistic formation of registers, vocabularies or terms that has gained wide usage across various disciplines and strata for work class differentiation. But it is now used with bias, prejudice and discrimination tendencies. Therefore, its development should first of all have a retrace to its etymology, followed by its reformation, and a proper extensive orientation on its usage. That is, middle cadre manpower development and challenges can best be addressed linguistically and artistically. Language remains the only best instrument for, and one of the most potent ways of teaching and learning science, art or whatever.

Finally, considering the stance of arts and languages in polytechnic education and the society in general. There is a dare need to: review, effect and standardise the curricula of arts and languages in the system, apply them to solving of problems, take them seriously and accord them their deserved status, provide the needed suitable logistics, environment and measures, and following

their professional and natural methods, while upholding their invaluable wealth of opportunities, norms, values and systems. It is important to note that the extent that science will and can go depends on how far language is ready to carry it.

Characteristics and Functions of Language

Every language displays the core features of language proposed by C.H. Hockeit, as noted by Allen (1975:18). Here, we only highlight them without details, being that they do not constitute our core pursuit here. Agbedo (2000:3) notes that those characteristics proposed by Hockett include vocal-auditory channel, arbitrariness, productivity, cultural transmission, interchangeability, semanticity, displacement, discreteness, etc. Others also given unanimously by various linguists are that language is creative, versatile, unique, rule-governed, dynamic, systematic, learnable, dualistic, symbolic and innate.

Language performs communicative, expressive, informative, performative, directive, ideational, unification and humanisation functions besides its use as phatic communion and a medium of thought. It means that language is used to: communicate knowledge, etc., inform and direct, say, the polytechnic populace; give directives, orders, instructions; perform various activities; and share interactions and for exchange of pleasantries— greetings, wishes, love and business transactions (Nwala, 2008; Anagbogu et al., 2001; Monday and Eze. 2012:165). Language is used to keep records, influence people and as an instrument of faction.

Monday and Eze (20 12:161) agree with the above, noting in addition that language represents a particular field of human activity, which to us, revolves round our subject matter, arts and languages in polytechnic education. Reflecting on the position of Hornby et al., Monday and Eze (20 12:161) further note, 'to acquire the art and skill of language, and to benefit from it, ii is needful to study systems which constitute language: phonology/phonetics, syntax, morphology, semantics and pragmatics' [with our addition].

This is our position and motion on languages and other arts in Nigerian polytechnics education and beyond for maximal benefits, especially being taken seriously with a view to eliminating the anomalies in the system owing to the deficiency or low status of these fields, which manifest various degrees of adverse effects, including poor knowledge and performance of students and graduates of polytechnics (and other institutions) in Nigeria and beyond. Education regulatory bodies like all the ministries of education, CBAAC, Academic Francoise, Society for the Promotion of Igbo Language and Culture, Society for Promoting Nigerian Languages and Culture (SPNLAC), NBTE, etc. ought to do more to this effect. The foregoing thus appraises the invaluable significance of arts and languages in polytechnic education in Nigeria in particular and the world at large.

Conclusion

In spite of the enormous contributions and essence of arts and languages in polytechnic education, these fields are yet to attain their well-deserved status, attention, treatment and application, as a result of which the glaring adverse effects of the disregard and anomalies manifest greatly on the school system. Polytechnic, etymologically means many ('poli'), arts (technos) from Greek derivation, and thus should traditionally be an institution of many arts programmes: literature, languages, history, philosophy, archaeology, cultural studies, arts, music, linguistics and communication, painting, drawing, etc., based on science, technical and vocational skills acquisition, rather than the contemporary otherwise— the abandonment, deviation and poor involvement in the supposed fields. Unfortunately, most of these courses do

not exist in Nigerian polytechnics. And, there is even high level of discrimination against Arts courses therein. Nigeria's multilingual artistic and geographical factors and nature presuppose our subject matter. Intensive and better studies in these areas will effect changes, development of various facets, including middle cadre manpower development, education standard and enormous benefits. This revolves around Nigerian arts and languages besides English and French Languages and indigenous arts and those of others, which we must be mindful of how to adopt the alien so that the adoption would not be at the expense of ours.

We conclude with the views of Brooks (1975) and Oguegbune-Okwuenu (2006:72). Brooks avers that foreign languages are very important because they prepare the youths for industrialisation and trade. And, Oguegbune-Okwuenu observes that French as a Foreign language in Nigerian schools [polytechnics too] will enhance intellectual, scientific, philosophical and literary benefits, enabling learners to interpret some scientific and philosophical problems as they come (also see Chado, 2006:64-8; Tondo, 2006:78-86; Okoye, 2006:92; Haliru and lshikwen, 2008:44-50,53-4). It suffices, thus, to say that languages and arts have greatly contributed more to the development of Nigeria, including Nigerian polytechnic education, than science and technology. There can never be science and technology without languages and arts, their engines, without which there can be no communication of the knowledge, information, inventions, discoveries and entire activities of science and technology.

Recommendation
In view of the foregoing, recommend that:
  i. Arts and languages should be fully incorporated into the polytechnic education;
  ii. More arts and languages departments should be created across all Nigerian polytechnics;
  iii. Their curriculum should be reviewed and made extensive as well as efficacious;
  iv. Languages should not be merely used for communication purpose but beyond, towards career pursuit;
  v. Language should not be taught and learnt for the sake of teaching and learning but the otherwise too;
  vi. Arts and languages libraries, laboratories and research centres should be established, well-funded and maintained across Nigerian polytechnics;
  vii. Wide range of mass orientation of students, staffs and managements of polytechnics via various educative and informative programmes.

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